

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

Hit comedy director Paul Feig was definitely the man for the job when it came to rebooting the beloved comedy classic *Ghostbusters* – and he knew just the women he needed to introduce the franchise to a whole new audience. Words Adam Colby

Paul Feig has long been a fan of the original *Ghostbusters* movie, which was released back in 1984. "I saw it the opening weekend in the theatre and had honestly never seen a comedy do what that movie did to that audience," he recalls. "People, including myself, just lost our minds, not only because it was funny. It was the funniest people – we all loved Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis, and Ernie Hudson, so seeing them together – this supergroup of funny guys – made it even better. It's one of these things that make you say, 'I wish I had thought of that idea.'"

So when the film's original director Ivan Reitman approached him about helming a reboot, he needed little persuasion. However, this time around, instead of a supergroup of funny guys, Feig turned instead to some of Hollywood's best comedienne, led by his regular muse Melissa McCarthy and Kristen Wiig, both of whom starred in his breakthrough movie *Bridesmaids*.

"Funny people fighting the paranormal is still the greatest idea ever," he explains. "And it felt like there was still so much to explore outside the worlds of the first two films. I thought, 'How would I do it?' Well, I'd make it with the four funniest women I know. That excites me, because it makes it something new."

With McCarthy the first to commit to the project, Feig and Reitman set about assembling the new team of *Ghostbusters*.

"Kristen's name just kept coming

up," the director says, "but I didn't even know if she'd want to do it, because she's been showing what a great actress she is in so many dramas lately. Then, out of the blue, my wife was talking to Kristen and she said, 'Oh, I know Paul's doing *Ghostbusters*, and if he'd ever want me to do any little part in it, I'd love to.' That was music to my ears, because Kristen would be so good in this role. She's really one of the funniest people in the world – she makes me laugh and always has."

The remaining two 'busters, *Saturday Night Live* star Kate McKinnon and Leslie Jones, are relatively unknown in this part of the world, but Feig is in no doubt that the quartet mesh together perfectly.

"That's why it was important to me to cast actors who were friends in real life," he adds. "Because when you do that, you get a level of camaraderie, realness, and warmth between them that you don't sometimes get when you put actors together who don't know each other."

"It's always been important to me – it's one of the reasons why I think *Bridesmaids* worked so well. Kristen and Melissa were Groundlings [the legendary LA improv company] together, did *Bridesmaids* and *Saturday Night Live* together. Kate and Leslie are on *SNL* right now. All four of them have worked together in various projects, and they all have a very different sense of humor that complements

each other.

"Kristen is just so good at that contained, neurotic comedy that she keeps very fun. Kate is such a physical comedian, but has this inner oddness, providing the movie with weirdo energy. Leslie is just an explosion that comes onto the set. And Melissa is the leader of the pack. You're really getting four very distinct personalities – who also happen to be able to kick a lot of ghost ass."

Although it boasts an all-new cast and story, the new version does tip its hat to the original. For example, original stars Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd have cameos, while Feig was also influenced by the look of the original 1984 film, in which the ghosts were all captured with old-school camera tricks and techniques.

"It was important to me that the characters have very distinct personalities," he says of the ghosts and spirits. "I didn't want them to be cartoons, but definitely people who grab your attention. While we're keeping the movie grounded, I liked the idea they could have these eclectic and eccentric personalities that play out."

"So many movies with CG effects are all created in the computer, with actors performing with a tennis ball on a stick. I didn't want that – I wanted interaction with the actors. I wanted my ghosts to look like people – especially because this movie is a comedy." **S**

FEIG FAVES



Freaks & Geeks (1999)

Feig's cult TV series about a group of high school misfits in the '70s only lasted one season but went on to launch the careers of Judd Apatow, Seth Rogen, James Franco, Jason Segel and a host of other stars. Let's hope that this will be his next reboot.



Bridesmaids (2011)

Armed with a great script from star Kristen Wiig, this filthily funny comedy proved that women could behave just as badly as men on screen. As well as Wiig, this was the film that set McCarthy on to the way to big screen stardom.



The Heat (2013)

The buddy cop genre gets a gender makeover, with Sandra Bullock as a straight-laced FBI agent reluctantly partnered with a slobbish detective (McCarthy). As with most of his films, the former stand-up comic and actor has an uncredited cameo in this.



Spy (2015)

Feig's most recent film is a spy spoof that reunited *Bridesmaids* stars McCarthy and Rose Byrne. However, Brit funny lady Miranda Hart steals every scene she is in, and action star Jason Statham also has fun sending up his macho persona.

• **Ghostbusters**
is out on
Oct 12